

# **ERT MOORE: EXPERIENCES OF A PIONEER EDUCATOR**

Interviewee: Ert Moore

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## **Description**

Ert Moore was born in Indiana in 1902 and spent his early life there. He recounts his early school years and the requirements for graduation. Early in life he decided that teaching would be his career goal. After getting the minimum requirements for credentials, he began teaching in rural schools in Indiana. When funds permitted, he would return for more college training. He also came to the West, where he worked in Washington and California.

After obtaining a four-year college degree in 1928, Ert Moore went to Georgia to teach. There he married and had one child. The family moved to Ohio where, after two years, the depressed economic situation caused a dismissal of the newer teachers. Ert Moore retrained by taking a correspondence course in detective work. Jobs in this field took him to Buffalo, New York, and Chicago, Illinois, until the spring of 1935.

Mr. Moore desired to return to teaching. A teachers' agency gave information of a job in a remote area of Nevada. He got the job and began twenty-five years of teaching and education work in Nevada. The school at Deer Lodge offered quite a contrast to life in the big cities, but he had previous experience with small schools.

A decline in numbers closed the Deer Lodge School, so the Moores moved to Beatty, Nevada. Mr. Moore learned that the principal was expected to take care of many health problems of the Indians as well as solve the academic problems. We learn of the close relationship of school and community. Mr. Moore also relates vignettes of many of the old-timers of the Beatty area.

World War II brought a change in many lives. Mr. Moore was told to report to Gabbs Valley to work in the summer of 1942, as the mining operations there were considered vital to the war effort. When many families came that summer, it was evident a school would be needed. Ert Moore was asked to organize the school district. He tells in detail of the emergence of the school from its infancy to maturity. The community and life in it are also described.

In 1957 Ert Moore decided to move to a city area and to be involved with elementary school children. He became an administrator in the Washoe County School District in Reno, where he served as principal of Home Gardens, McKinley Park, and Mary S. Doten schools. Mr. Moore comments on the various schools he served and on the Washoe County school system in general. Retirement came in 1968.

Mr. Moore's hobbies of collecting Indian artifacts, prospecting, and fishing have taken him to many parts of Nevada. His knowledge of and love of this state have created similar feelings among many of his students. He has a positive attitude of looking for and expecting the best from his students and teachers.



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BEBE ANN MILLS PRODUCED THIS ORAL HISTORY AS A STUDENT IN THE  
UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO, 1979 SPRING SESSION COURSE, "ORAL HISTORY:  
METHOD AND TECHNIQUE" HELD AT THE CHURCHILL COUNTY MUSEUM.  
BEBE ANN IS A TEACHER AT THE MINNIE BLAIR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN FALLON.

An Oral History Conducted by Bebe Ann Moore Mills

University of Nevada Oral History Program

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## PREFACE TO THE DIGITAL EDITION

Established in 1964, the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) explores the remembered past through rigorous oral history interviewing, creating a record for present and future researchers. The program's collection of primary source oral histories is an important body of information about significant events, people, places, and activities in twentieth and twenty-first century Nevada and the West.

The UNOHP wishes to make the information in its oral histories accessible to a broad range of patrons. To achieve this goal, its transcripts must speak with an intelligible voice. However, no type font contains symbols for physical gestures and vocal modulations which are integral parts of verbal communication. When human speech is represented in print, stripped of these signals, the result can be a morass of seemingly tangled syntax and incomplete sentences—totally verbatim transcripts sometimes verge on incoherence. Therefore, this transcript has been lightly edited.

While taking great pains not to alter meaning in any way, the editor may have removed false starts, redundancies, and the “uhs,” “ahs,” and other noises with which speech is often liberally sprinkled; compressed some passages which, in unaltered form, misrepresent the chronicler's meaning; and relocated some material to place information in its intended context. Laughter is represented with [laughter] at the end of a sentence in which it occurs, and ellipses are used to indicate that a statement has been interrupted or is incomplete...or that there is a pause for dramatic effect.

As with all of our oral histories, while we can vouch for the authenticity of the interviews in the UNOHP collection, we advise readers to keep in mind that these are remembered pasts, and we do not claim that the recollections are entirely free of error. We can state, however, that the transcripts accurately reflect the oral history recordings on which they were based. Accordingly, each transcript should be approached with the

same prudence that the intelligent reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information. All statements made here constitute the remembrance or opinions of the individuals who were interviewed, and not the opinions of the UNOHP.

In order to standardize the design of all UNOHP transcripts for the online database, most have been reformatted, a process that was completed in 2012. This document may therefore differ in appearance and pagination from earlier printed versions. Rather than compile entirely new indexes for each volume, the UNOHP has made each transcript fully searchable electronically. If a previous version of this volume existed, its original index has been appended to this document for reference only. A link to the entire catalog can be found online at <http://oralhistory.unr.edu/>.

For more information on the UNOHP or any of its publications, please contact the University of Nevada Oral History Program at Mail Stop 0324, University of Nevada, Reno, NV, 89557-0324 or by calling 775/784-6932.

Alicia Barber  
Director, UNOHP  
July 2012

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## INTRODUCTION

Ert Moore was born in Indiana in 1902 and spent his early life there. He recounts his early school years and the requirements for graduation. Early in life he decided that teaching would be his career goal. After getting the minimum requirements for credentials, he began teaching in rural schools in Indiana. When funds permitted he would return for more college training. He also came to the West where he worked in Washington and California.

After realizing his goal of obtaining a four year college degree in 1928, Ert Moore went to Georgia to teach. there he married and had one child. The family moved to Ohio where, after two years, the depressed economic situation caused a dismissal of the newer teachers. Ert Moore retrained by taking a correspondence course in detective work. Jobs in this field took him to Buffalo, New York, and Chicago, Illinois until the spring of 1935.

Mr. Moore desired to return to teaching. A teacher's agency gave information of a job in a remote area of Nevada. He got the job

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A decline in numbers closed the Deer Lodge School, so the Moores moved to Beatty, Nevada. Mr. Moore learned that principal was expected to take care of many health problems of the Indians as well as solve the academic problems. We learn of the close relationship of school and community. Mr. Moore also relates vignettes of many of the old timers of the Beatty area.

World War II brought a change in many lives. Mr. Moore was told to report to Gabbs Valley to work in the summer of 1942 as the mining operations there were considered vital to the war effort. When many families came that summer, it was evident a school would be needed. Mr. Ert Moore was asked to organize the school district. He tells in detail of the emergence of the school from its infancy to maturity. The community and life in it are also described.

In 1957 Ert Moore decided to move to a city area and to be involved with elementary school children. He becomes an administrator in the Washoe County School District where he served as principal of Home Gardens, McKinley Park, and Mary S. Doten Schools. Mr. Moore comments on the various schools he served and on the Washoe County School System in general. Retirement came in 1968.

Mr. Moore's hobbies of collecting Indian artifacts, prospecting, and fishing have taken him to many parts of Nevada. His knowledge of and love of this state have created similar feelings among many of his students. He has a positive attitude of looking for and expecting the best from his students and teachers.

When invited to participate in the Oral History Project, Mr. Moore accepted graciously. Recording sessions were held at his home in Sparks, Nevada, during the fall and winter of 1978-1979. His memory is excellent, notes were well organized, and records have been kept to verify dates.

The Oral History Project of the University of Nevada-Reno Library preserves the past and the present for future research by tape recording the recollections of people who have been important to the development of Nevada and the West. Scripts resulting from the interviews are deposited in the Special Collections Departments of the University libraries at Reno and Las Vegas. Copies of this script will also be available at the Churchill County Museum and the Churchill County Library. Mr. Ert Moore has generously donated his literary rights in his oral history to the University of Nevada-Reno, and has designated the volume as open for research.

Bebe Ann Moore Mills  
Fallon, Nevada  
1979

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## EXPERIENCES OF A PIONEER EDUCATOR

I, Ert Moore, was born November 12, 1902, in Brown county, Indiana, to D.C. Moore and Abbie Moore, who were farmers. In those days both husband and wife did daily work on the farm. The farm was located in a somewhat isolated area of scenic Indiana. The nearest store was three miles distant in a small village, and here resided an elderly country doctor who ministered to the health needs of people in a wide area of this hilly country.

Imo Moore was the first child in this family, and I was the second child, followed by Albert Moore (deceased), Vivian Moore (Lutes) and Julius Moore. Our parents, being poor, could provide us with little money for recreation, but they instilled into us the great desire for the love of books and our spare time, after farm chores were completed, was spent in reading. Our library was small, but we read the books over and over again.

About one mile from my rural home was a one-room country school, Poplar Grove. It was located on a knoll, which was surrounded by a large forest of maple, hickory and oak. Into this school room came all ages

of children, from beginners to 8<sup>th</sup> graders. My first days at school were frightening. I was a shy child at home and would always run and hide when company came, and never did I eat at a table when visitors were present. Thus, the school room was no place for a scared child such as I. I would repeatedly run home, and the teacher would send home after me. My father grew tired of this and switched my legs and then took me to school and switched me there. I then settled in to the routine and did good work for the eight years.

It was a custom for a different teacher to be in the school each year, so that no favoritism would be shown. Nearly every teacher kept a 6-foot long witch standing in the corner, but only twice was it used during the eight years.

There was no high school in the township, and during two of my eight years in the one-room school the teacher, in addition to the elementary school pupils, had to teach eight freshman high school students.

I didn't get much work done when the Latin class was in session, as it fascinated me. The eighth year was a stinker, for there

were so many requirements to be met before one could graduate. Indiana has ninety-two counties, and all had to be memorized. One had to name the bones of the body, all of the states and capitals, and then make a passing grade on a county graduation examination on all elementary subjects. I thought I had the world by the tail when I received the graduation certificate which now permitted me to attend high school.

Our township of Van Buren had now constructed a high school about five miles from my home. It was built near the center of the township, which would equalized the walking distance of the students attending. A few rode horses to school, but I was one of the walking poor. The school had two teachers and about thirty students. There were no elective course, as everything taught was a requirement which would meet entrance requirements to teachers' colleges within the state of Indiana.

Teachers were the only professional people the students encountered. So everyone in high school chose to be a teacher and planned for a teacher's college. I was interested in how teachers handled the day-to-day situations and knew they were truly dedicated. School to me was a challenge, but the math produced extra work and worry, as I found I was not mathematically minded. Algebra and geometry caused me to have deep worries, but I struggled through with passing grades. Latin was my most enjoyable subject, along with history. My average grade upon graduation was B plus.

During those years of growing up and watching the struggle for survival on a farm where one had to fight nature at every turn (pests and weather) and then the fluctuation of farm prices (once my father sent a veal calf to the stockyards and received back 25¢ after sales yard expenses were deducted)

determined for me that college was the answer for my future. I also knew what hard labor was all about, as I had worked at many jobs on farms for ten cents per hour, and then went to a lumber yard for twenty-five cents per hour.

The hard work caused you to save what you earned, so I was able to enroll in Central Normal College in Danville, Indiana, to prepare for a teaching position. I enrolled in the college in 1920 for a term of three months, and at the end of the term went out and worked for earning for another term of college. I kept this up until in 1922, when I was granted a teaching certificate.

My teaching experience began in my home township in a rural school of eight grades, Spurgeon School 1922-23, followed by the same type schools, 1923-24 Mt. Zion; 1924-25 South Salem. Discipline was a great problem in these schools, and I had to use The rod in many instances at the beginning of school, for it was the custom for the larger pupils to try out the teacher. I began to question the philosophy of the school people in changing teachers every year. It seemed that after a teacher got control of the school and progress was being made he or she should be retained to build on the achievements already accomplished, but this was not the policy.

When school was out in 1925 I read that men were wanted for the Alaskan fishing fleet and decided to give it a try and forego teaching for a period of time. My first leg of the train journey ended at Yakima, Washington, where I visited a cousin who had been teaching and working in the fruit packing houses. He thought I should go on to Seattle and try my objective as planned. When I arrived in Seattle the hiring was completed. Funds now getting smaller, I was hired on paving jobs and then went to Concrete, Washington, where Stone and Webster Co. was building a large dam. I worked for several months in the dining hall

and then I was sent to a new job by them at South San Francisco, where the construction of the Bayshore Highway was Beginning. I worked there as brakeman on the dirt trains until March 1, 1926. With all the varied work experiences behind me, I knew that teaching had to be my life's work and left California for Indiana to enroll for a college degree.

I returned to college in March of 1926 and enrolled in a school administrator's course which would assure me of a school administrator's certificate upon receiving my A. B. degree. I continued in college until August, 1926, when I was informed by the County Superintendent of Brown County, Indiana, of one of his schools, Billheimer, which had no teacher for the coming year because every teacher previously was mauled by the students. He said I had a good reputation for quieting unruly pupils. It seemed a good challenge, so I signed a contract, ever fearful of what problems faced me.

The students were ready for me and had their plans as used on other teachers. When school began there was no whip in the corner as they had been used to. This puzzled them. On the playground in the ball games I managed to always bump pretty hard against the rebellious ones, to let them know that I was strong enough to defend myself. I tried kindness, but it didn't seem to work.

Then, after three weeks, hell broke loose when they began cursing me and throwing books around the room. I sent two boys to cut a large whip six feet long and when they returned I told the school that we would have a vote after all the large boys removed their shirts. When the shirts were removed I announced that we were making a choice between all the large boys having the whip used on their backs or we would have a funeral and bury the whip on the school ground. It was to be understood that, if

the vote for burying the whip was in the majority, there was to be no more trouble in the school. Everyone voted for the funeral of the whip and what a solemn funeral procession marched out onto the grounds, and I delegated two of the worst offenders to dig the grave and bury the stick. From then on school was a pleasure and what wonderful friends we all were. The disturbing element became my most loyal supporters.

After the close of school, I returned to college and remained until I received my A.B. degree in June of 1928. During the last years in college, in addition to the required education courses, I took courses in first aid, physical education and basketball coaching. I had also had basketball experience, for I played one season on the college varsity team.

College days over, employment was my worry, as I must repay money borrowed for the last few months of college expenses. There was a fellow graduate from Georgia who had lead all religious activities among the students. He asked if I would be interested in his home school in Georgia, and I could board with his parents. His father was a member of the county school board and was a deacon in the local church. When he told me that the salary would be \$150 per month I immediately accepted, as previous pay for teaching was \$100 per month.

Upon arriving at the school in Mountain Hill, Georgia, which was located in a hilly pine forested area, I found that I was expected to teach seven grades of elementary and two years of high school. This seemed impossible. I also discovered that in previous years the same work was done by two teachers. I then remembered that during my elementary schooling for two years the teacher had to teach elementary classes and high school, all in the same room. I began to adopt the methods of those past teachers and things began to



work. No discipline problems were there, and all were eager to learn. However, I had, after three months, an increase in enrollment and now it was impossible to continue this way, as the children were not getting the needed personal attention. I appealed to the board of education and they gave me a teacher's aide. The aide, Marie Kennon, was a high school graduate who was very capable and together we did a commendable job under the circumstances. The aide and I got along so well that on March 15, 1929, we were married in Hamilton, Georgia.

In May of 1929 I was offered the position as principal of Chalker High School, Southington, Ohio. This was the kind of position I was eagerly awaiting and could not refuse. Upon arriving at the school, I was informed that, in addition to being principal, I would have a full teaching day, which included two classes of Latin. I had not seen a Latin book since leaving high school, but since high school Latin had been easy for me I had little difficulty. Also, my assignment included coaching eight-grade boys' basketball, coaching high school baseball and directing all school dramatic plays, plus directing one three-act play each year for the P.T.A. Many students came from homes whose parents had been born in Europe, and they had arrived here to work in the steel mills. There were many discipline problems among the children from these families.

During the first year at this location my wife, Marie, became pregnant and in June, 1930, we returned to Georgia, where my daughter, Bebe Ann, was born on July, 1930, at Mountain Hill Georgia.

The three years at Chalker High saw the depression getting worse, and county boards of education in Ohio began eliminating teachers who were not married to Ohio women. I was one of those, and in 1932 I received my notice of dismissal.

Jobs at this time were no-existent because of the depression. I returned to my home in Indiana and took a correspondence course in intelligence undercover work. Upon completion of the course, I was employed in Chicago with Chicago Surface Lines, or street railways. This was a time of corruption, gangstering and unions trying to take control of legitimate business with aid from the police departments. I was given a number 1080 and my name was never used after that time during my employment. My family and I lived in seclusion with no friends and no contact with neighbors. I was dangerous work and one had to be extremely cautious to survive. My job lasted a year, until July, 1934, when we had to leave Chicago in the night for Buffalo, New York, as I had been identified by the opposing forces. I was now employed in Buffalo by the International Railroad Company, doing the same work as in Chicago. In December, 1934, I realized that for my family's safety I should quit and return to school work for which I was prepared.

I returned to Indiana seeking school jobs, but I found jobs were scarce and school trustees were demanding half your salary as kickbacks. This disturbed me greatly, for I felt it was against all rules of decency and democracy. In the meantime I worked at various jobs in bridge building and on road construction and in a factory, always hoping for a chance to return to school work.

It was August 1, 1935, when a teachers' agency in Reno, Nevada, advertised at Indiana colleges for a rural teacher who had a school age child. This was my opportunity, and upon contacting the agency I was hired for the isolated school, Faye, located in the high mountains about thirty miles east of Pioche, Nevada, in Lincoln County. My salary was to be \$900 for a year of nine months. My wife was apprehensive about the move to Nevada, but I



was thrilled, for I had been across Nevada in 1926, and the desert had a certain appeal to me. Yet, bringing a family into a pioneering setting caused me to contemplate what the results might be.

We owned a Ford sedan, and as departure date was approaching we were trying to cram it with what necessities we might need. Then it was off for the unknown. Our first experience was to find that most of the roads were not paved and motels were scarce. In crossing Colorado from Denver to Salt Lake City we were getting low on radiator water when we saw some water coming down the roadside ditch and decided to get some, but an elderly lady was standing guard over it with a shotgun and ordered us to drive on, as the water was for her garden. This taught us that water in the desert is a priceless item!

The rancher at whose ranch the school was located had sent us a map to follow, but he had neglected to mark off an abandoned mountain road. We took this road and nearly wrecked the car, over high centers in the road, before reaching the ranch. This really was a different world into which we had entered. The ranch was located at about 5,000 feet altitude in a small mountain valley surrounded by very high mountain peaks. Piñon pine trees were everywhere, and only a few acres were available for enclosed pasture. This was a real cattle ranch, with the cattle roaming over the government lands for their feed. The rancher's home was of log construction, and our living quarters of one room for a kitchen and living room, and a 10' x 10' bedroom, and one room for school, was an old kitchen range, which required wood, and the school stove was a wood-burner, too. Our water was secured from a pipe some distance away, which ran from a small reservoir fed by a spring. There was a real old-fashioned outhouse, too. Adjacent to the house, and leading from our

large room into the hillside, was our cellar or storage room.

My wife, after taking into account our surroundings, was deeply disturbed and emotionally upset. The long, tiresome trip had helped to unnerve her, too. We knew we had to stay, though, for we didn't have money enough to leave. After resting a few days and, through the kindness of the Everest Hackett family, our neighbors and landlord, we began to enjoy the mountain environment and were determined to make a success of our endeavors.

On the mountain above us was located the Blue Bird gold mine, and one of the owners had two children for school; the rancher had two; and I had one. This was to be the total enrollment. Two were in first, two in second grade, and one in the seventh. This was the smallest enrollment I had ever experienced, and it was challenging for I could give much individual attention. By the end of September the mine owner decided to leave, and this left us with three children—one in first grade, one in second and one in seventh. All three children were good students, and I surely piled on the work. Progress was great, although we didn't have much supplementary material. I had to do much improvising and building my own materials.

The autumn days began to shower down the abundance of pine nuts. They covered the ground under every piñon tree. We loved the taste of them, and every day after school, buckets in hand, we took to the hills for our recreation. In a short time, we had harvested about one hundred pounds, and these rich protein nuts supplied a great food supplement for us during the winter.

In October our first check came, and then off to Pioche, the county seat, and to the bank. Pioche was an interesting place, with its streets cut along the mountain side, and

there were many saloons and gambling places, which were customary in a mining town. Very few stores for shopping were there and when we returned to the ranch we were told that the best place to buy things was at Cedar City, Utah. The rancher then informed us to make a trip to Cedar City and purchase enough food for the entire winter, because the snow would begin to fall in November, and the road to Pioche would be closed for months. We now began our shopping list, estimating all our needs for the coming siege. This was new to us, but we knew that to come up short meant that we would be hungry before spring. It took two trips before we had our cellar filled. Also, we were to notify our relatives in Indiana and Georgia of our situation, so that they would not expect mail during those winter months, for our mail came to Pioche and there would be no way to get to the post office. We also purchased extra radio batteries, for this would be our only contact with the outside. We could not send messages, but how welcome it was going to be to be receiving news and programs to help us endure our isolation.

Rose Valley was about half way between Deer Lodge, our location, and Pioche. We became friends with the Browning Churn family there. He was the local teacher in a small one-room school and we visited them on Thanksgiving Day. When we returned home, the snow began to fall, and it continued for days and nights. It closed the roads for everything but the rancher's large truck. We were locked in for good. This was the beginning of one of the most severe winters Deer Lodge, and Nevada, had experienced. It seemed that all it could do was snow and the blizzards were terrible. Extreme cold penetrated everywhere. In the school we place the desks as close to the stove as possible and kept on heavy coats. In our living quarters it was just as bad. The only warm place was in

bed. We were all thankful that in October we had harvested a great supply of wood. The cold reached 40° below zero, and the rancher's cattle froze to death standing on their feet. We all prayed a lot for no sickness to occur. It was just too cold for germs to exist. The Christmas vacation was not enjoyed, as it was just the same thing, keep indoors and try to keep warm. The only bright thing was that I didn't have to keep the school stove burning.

By April the children were getting restless, but since the sun was beginning to produce more heat the melting was beginning. They were eagerly watching for a peek at some bare ground. How happy they were when enough bare ground showed that they could play some games. They had grown weary from throwing snowballs.

The school year came to a close, and great progress had been made by the pupils. The visit of the deputy state superintendent was surprising, as he wanted me to advance the primary children by two grades, which I did not do, as I didn't believe in it. I simply asked him to send more supplementary readers and materials. I then signed a contract for a second year.

The school year ended, but we did not have any extra money for a vacation and decided to remain on the ranch. I took to the hills looking for old Indian camps in hope of finding arrowheads. Many were found, and I became an avid collector. My wife and daughter, Bebe Ann, accompanied me on many of the outings. Soon the summer was gone, and it was back to school.

School opened with three pupils—one in second grade, one in third, and one in the eighth. For this second year it was a repeat of the first, with another snowy and cold time. But we were now experienced and met the situations in a more prepared manner. Our food supply was better selected, and our

worries were greatly minimized. The school ended with everyone promoted. The eight grader was promoted to high school, which left only two pupils. This meant no more school at Deer Lodge, and the Moore family would have to move on to some other place. We left Deer Lodge with heavy emotions, for our experiences had been so greatly enjoyed. The Hackett family had been so kind and considerate during our stay and did so much to help us in every way. Their hospitality to a family of greenhorns could never have been measured.

Since there was no more school at Deer Lodge and school was out, it was time to seek a new location. The deputy superintendent informed me of a need for teachers at Goldfield and Beatty, Nevada. We left Pioche for these two possible school vacancies by way of Ely, Nevada.

When we arrived at Ely, we were reminded of our experiences there in October of 1935. It was in Ely at that time that I had to take the examination in Nevada School Law. I had been preparing for the exam for a month and thought the examination would last about two hours, so my family accompanied me and would shop while I was writing. The exam began at 1:00 p.m. and there were about twenty taking the exam. I never saw such a complicated exam before. In about thirty minutes people began leaving the room, for they were unprepared for that type of exam. After two hours I was the only one left and I was writing at five o'clock. I told the deputy who was conducting the exam that I was only about half completed. She said that I could stay until I had finished it. I was worried, too, for my wife and child were on the outside in the cold, but I knew that they would somehow endure. I was eight o'clock when I was through, and what a relief it was. The exam

was made up of all essay-type questions. If you failed the test you had to attend summer school at the University of Nevada. I felt that this type of test was to make failures, in order to force teachers into the summer school program. I learned, when the results came, that I had passed with a good grade. My wife and daughter were certainly glad to see me on that cold night after the test.

It was now on our journey from Ely to Tonopah, and what an experience over unpaved roads across sandy stretches when the car running boards would drag on the sides of the ruts. We eventually arrived in Goldfield, but found that all jobs had been filled that day. We hastened on to Beatty, hoping and praying that luck would be better. And what a relief to find that they needed a principal and the board, consisting of a Mr. Greenwood, Tom Harris, and Bill McCosky, quickly drew up a contract, and we all signed. Mr. McCosky was the brother-in-law of the Churns, our friends in Rose Valley, near Deer Lodge.

My salary was to be \$160 per month, and this seemed quite a raise over the \$900 per year I had received at Deer Lodge. I was to be the principal over the two-teacher elementary school and was to teach all high school subjects. Mr. Harris informed us that he owned several small houses and he would have one vacant for us when we returned in August.

Felling our problems were solved, we were on the road that night for Las Vegas, where we spent the night, and then on to Deer Lodge. Since my wife had not seen her folks in Georgia for three years, we decided to journey there and then go on to Indiana to bring back to Nevada our remaining possessions. In Indiana we purchased a two-wheel trailer and headed west. My sister, Imo, decided to return with us and then go on to California to visit

friends. It was on our trip from Deer Lodge to Beatty that we again learned the value of water in the desert. It was at Indian Springs that we were running low on water and needed drinking water and radiator water. The filling station man was very belligerent and discourteous and gave us a meager amount. This was in August, and temperatures were over 100 degrees, and we prayed that our water would carry us to Beatty, which it did.

Upon arriving in Beatty, Mr. Harris took us to the house in which we would be residing. That a shock it was, as it was a very small three-room miner's shack, which had been transported into Beatty from some abandoned mining camp. The house was filthy and dirty, and it would take gallons of real soapy water and hard scrubbing to make it livable. Someone had spat tobacco juice on the floors, and it had soaked into the old wooden boards. It took days of soaking and scrubbing before the rooms were free from filthy odors. Beatty had only a few large attractive homes. The majority of houses in the town were similar to ours—mining camp left-overs moved into the area for renting purposes. Our living quarters in order, I began to survey the school conditions.

The elementary school consisted of two rooms and toilets, and four grades were taught in each of the two rooms. This building was old but very sturdily constructed. The high school building consisted of a one-room structure brought in from some old mining camp. The dimensions of the building were about 12' x 20' and there was only one door. Heat came from an oil stove near the door, and the stove was between the students and the exit. It appeared that when winter came the flimsy building would not be a comfortable or safe place in which to conduct classes. Playground equipment consisted of one backstop and goal for basketball for the older

students and nothing for the younger ones to play with.

I began checking books and enrollment and making necessary plans for the opening of school. But during the week preceding opening of school, Mr. Greenwood, president of the school board, told me I could not be principal but would have to teach upper grades, and a married lady would be principal and teach high school. Mr. Greenwood owned several businesses in town, including a garage, and he had made a deal with a man and wife from Montana, whereby if the wife could be principal, the man would lease the garage. I knew, from school law, that I had a valid contract, and therefore went for advice to Leonard Sledge, the deputy state superintendent. Superintendent Sledge confirmed my valid contract and notified the Board that my contract was binding on the District. Since I had not adhered to Mr. Greenwood's plans, I knew that I now had an apparent enemy, and, since Mr. Greenwood owned the only major saloon, I felt that I was the subject for much discussion. I did not frequent saloons, and therefore knew I would have little contact with Mr. Greenwood or his chums. The family from Montana leased Mr. Greenwood's garage, and the wife became the upper grades' elementary teacher.

School began with ten in high school. Two were White, and the others were Indians. In the elementary school there were about fifteen white children and twenty-five Indians. The Indian children came from the Shoshone Indian Camp across the Amargosa River from the town. They lived in all types of shacks and brush shelters and obtained their water from the river. The income of these families was very small. Some of the males worked on the relief programs in operation at that time. The Indian Service supervised them and gave them surplus foods and took care of

their health needs when they became acute. Since I was principal, the Service told me that I was delegated to look after the Indians and to parcel out medicines which were left at the school, and I was to report to the Indian Service doctor at Lone Pine, California, when the doctor's Service was needed; and also I was authorized to place seriously ill Indians on the bus and send them to the Schurz, Nevada, hospital. The camp had an Indian medicine man to whom they first turned for medical and spiritual help. He used herbs and secret pow-wows, and he also tried to keep the younger ones in line by scare tactics and placing curses on them. He also was the one who taught all of the old tribal traditions. But the younger ones had associated too long with the white children, and the medicine man's work was not taken too seriously. One time Big Ike came to me concerning his wife, Big Bessie, and she really was huge—about three hundred pounds of her. He said his magic wouldn't work, and she had water running down her legs from female organs. He wanted to get medicine. I called the doctor and he said to put her on the bus to Schurz, as she had VD. The doctor said she got it as fast as they cured her, as they considered it a joke to sleep with the old heavy while the husband was out making medicine.

The Indian students loved basketball, and we laid out a court and installed another backstop and goal. Even though they were underfed they never seemed to tire when playing the game. This love for the game kept them punctual in attendance and there were no discipline problems to deal with. I found the Indian children very, very slow to learn, and eventually found that they were not thinking in English but they were thinking in Indian. All school work had to be translated over into Indian language and thought through and then turned back into English.

Even the really bright ones were doing this. This meant more time had to be given them for tests and other work. They were shy and never volunteered for anything. They would always respond when asked, but even though they knew the answers their responses were flavored by their Indian method of thinking. Grading them for their work of achievement could not be the same as that used for the white students. The white students had warm homes and plenty of food which left them with few family problems and worries, but he Indians worried about the cold, clothing and food.

I found that the Indian Service allowed ten cents per day per child for school lunch. It was impossible to feed them for that amount if supplies were bought locally, as our local stores were small and prices were high. My wife and I decided that by going to Las Vegas, over one hundred miles away, and purchasing sandwich spreads in large containers about once a month, and then getting bread, locally, we could give each child two sandwiches per day. My wife agreed to donate her time free in making the lunch, and so, for the first year, the children had a little food at noontime. The second year I asked for more money, because prices had risen and the government thought they were generous in increasing the amount two cents per day. This meant twelve cents per day was our income for feeding them. People in the town resented us for allowing Indians to come into our home for the school lunch. They thought it would encourage Indians to want to come into the white homes. It didn't bother us, as we knew these children had to be fed. During the last three years of my stay in Beatty, employment was zero and white children needed food, too. A demand was made for a school lunch, and the state and federal governments set up a lunch program in the old town hall. With the twelve cents



per day, Indian surplus foods and state and federal assistance, all the needy ones secured a hot lunch.

At the end of the first year the upper grades teacher resigned for health reasons, and it was evident to me that a man teacher was needed as a replacement. The Board employed a Mr. Fred Dees for the job. He was a very mature and experienced teacher and had had experience with Indians. He had taught at the boy's correctional institution at Elko, Nevada. Now, I knew that I had a helper to help with my planned programs. We needed playground equipment first and no money was available. The old poles from a defunct telegraph line to Goldfield were still in place. Local information was that Death Valley Scotty owned them. I left word at the saloons that when Scotty came to town to tell him to drop by the school. One day he came chugging up in the old car that is on display at Scotty's Castle in Death Valley. I asked for enough poles to make playground equipment, which he so generously granted. He invited me to bring the family and visit him at the castle, which we did. Mr. Dees and I went to the pole line, secured our poles and made the necessary playground equipment, which was greatly enjoyed by the children.

In the meantime, some county officials from Tonopah had heard of our school project. They came to the school and demanded to know why we took the old poles. When I told them Scotty have them to me they became furious and said he was a damn liar, that he never owned them, and that they belonged to the County. They fumed around for a while but told us to take no more. The equipment was used by the children for over twenty-five years, and we were richly rewarded for our efforts, as the poles had been standing unused in the desert for over a quarter of a century. Death Valley Scotty had made a

great contribution to the Beatty children even though it may have been questionable by the Tonopah officials, who were never interested in Beatty only when election time came. This episode with Scotty was quite a joke among the town folk and around the saloons for a long time. The admiration of Scotty for his gift to the school was long lasting.

After the playground was completed Mr. Dees and I looked at the old miner's hall or town hall to see if we could convert it to a basketball court. It was declared to be structurally sound with a good foundation by some local carpenters, and the project was approved by the School Board. The Board purchased the goals and floor varnish and others donated lumber for the backstops and donated labor completed the job. The court was small, but who cared, as basketball had come to Beatty. We had games with Tonopah, Manhattan, Goldfield, Boulder City, and Las Vegas. Every time there was a game the seats were filled and how those Indian children enjoyed it. At first, only Indian children played, as the white would not play with them, but the Indian children began to win games and a few whites then decided to play.

One day in early October of my first year there, not an Indian child appeared at school. This was puzzling and astounding and we waited for noon to see if they came for their lunch. None showed up for food and now we knew something was wrong. I went to the Indian camp and found it completely deserted. I knew they held pow-wows and assumed they had gone to Ash Meadows, Nevada, for one of these. But on the second day when they had not returned I called the Indian Service office in California for an explanation. The mystery was now solved, as I was informed that the Indian children and parents were gathering pine nuts near Lida in the Fish Lake Valley of Nevada. The children

were to be excused from school for a period of ten days for harvesting the nut crop, as this was one of their tribal food sources. School was carried on without them and when they returned we had to contend with pine nut shells for some time. The teachers were upset because of the ten days' absence. This meant added work by them to help bring the Indian children up to the class levels of those who had not been absent.

The high school was heated by a oil burner stove in the room, and I kept a one-gallon can of water on the stove for added humidity. In 1939 an agent of the United States Treasury Department came to the school looking for Robert Revert, a high school student. Robert's parents and brothers owned a store and a filling station. The agent informed me that he suspected Robert of scorching silver dollars. Since he had checked the store and filling station and could find no place where this could be done, he assumed Robert was doing it at the school! We talked with Robert, and he became frightened and went over to the stove and raised the water can. Under it was a silver dollar being cooked. It was very black, and the agent took it and explained how he had suspect Robert. Robert had been scorching them for a long time and giving them as change at the filling station. Then he would watch to see if any were returned by customers. The dollars were showing up in Las Vegas and Tonopah, and the agent decided that they had to have come from Beatty. The agent explained that Robert had violated a federal law regarding mutilating of money. After Robert had shed a lot of tears, the agent decided not to file charges.

High school and elementary students used the same toilets and during one fall it seemed that all parents of little girls were having to take them to the doctors in Las Vegas. No one informed me of anything until

I received a notice from the Nevada Health Office in Las Vegas to appear there. They showed me the names of little girls in my school who had VD. Many of the children came from homes of highly respectable people. The school was the only common place of meeting for these children. I had been educated in health courses that VD could not be caught from toilet seats, but they showed me the germs, under the microscope, taken from these girls. I was told to find out the guilty ones from the high school who might be infected and suspend them. I was also told to get new toilet seats, as apparently the present seats must have cracks in which the germs were lodging, and since the little girls had to slide on the seats they were pushing the germs into vital parts.

I went home trying to form a plan to discover who might be the guilty one. I gave a talk to the high school and pointed out that their health was so important that we should see a doctor if we suspected something was wrong with us, as we could harm others by scattering germs. This worked well as in a few days a girl was absent because she had gone to Las Vegas. Upon her return, she came and informed me she was ill and was leaving school. Our problem was solved, as we never had any more VD. This was the most difficult and touching problem I had experienced, as this was a motherless girl who had no parental supervision and had been living with friends who cared little for her.

All the equipment in the school was very antiquated and desks had been carved up very badly. When we needed extra desks, we secured them from the old Goldfield School at \$2 per desk. The desks had been in use when Goldfield was a boom town and were in very bad condition. Each room had a large out-of-date wall map and a globe that was very smudged with age. We had necessary paper

and pencils, but nothing extra, as money was not available. The Indian children took no books home with them, as they had no light at home and living conditions were such that the books would have been destroyed, and we had no replacements. The Indian children had artistic talents and loved to draw and make baskets and pottery. Miss Doobrovo was lower grades teacher one year and built an outside kiln and fired the pots they made. We discovered in drawing that the Indians could only draw what they could see or had seen, not what they imagined. One boy had drawn a picture of a broken-down covered wagon. We asked him where he got the idea and he told us he had seen it in a hidden canyon in the Beatty area. But, since the area was "taboo" by the medicine man, he could not take us to it. The medicine man thought that the government might still hold the tribe responsible for what became of the people a long time ago.

We observed that the teeth of the Indians were in bad shape. I asked for dental service for them, and finally a dental clinic was set up once a year at the Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley. We had complications, as many refused to go until the medicine man was convinced of the need and he ordered them to go. We transported them all to the clinic and they didn't know what to expect. We kept them in cars and released them one at time for when they heard some screams when a needle was put into the gum they would have run away. The little ones were not as frightened as the larger. Phil Cottonwood, an upper grade boy, was so rebellious that it took two of us to hold him in the chair. Many of the children had been having tooth aches and when the aches left after the visit to the clinic they looked forward to the next clinic. These clinics were held every year after that, and the whites wished there was a clinic for them.

The Board told me that any time I desired to go on a field trip with the high school students it would be o.k. When we were studying plants or animals in biology or other sciences we would head for various locations in Death Valley or to the large sand dunes south of Beatty. These trips stimulated the interests of the students and they learned by actual contact with the snakes, lizards, packrats and vegetation of the area. We tried to broaden the interests of the children, too, while on the playground. We got them interested in field events and held a May Day celebration for all the students. We divided them into age groups and gave ribbons for their efforts in the many events. The community took great interest in these play days, and we always had a great representation of parents present. We had no P.T.A. but a well-organized group of parents sponsored various activities for the children. They held dances at various times, raffles and bake sales for raising of money for the annual Christmas party, which meant that each child received a large bag of fruit, candies and nuts. One year I was sent to Las Vegas to purchase for the party and came away with two hundred pounds of peanuts. It was all the peanuts that the Las Vegas stores had.

Beatty had several families of rowdies. Some from these families were teenagers who never went to school but who tried to disrupt the women's dances and other social events given for the school children. We couldn't do much about it, except to try to quiet them down or ask the to leave, as the law enforcement was weak. Mr. J. Vignolo was elderly and had been the deputy sheriff of Nye County in Beatty for many years. He put Indians in jail but seldom ever bothered the whites. During the five years in Beatty, no Indian had ever cause trouble at any of the events or with the whites. They sometimes



fought among themselves and in a few cases resorted to killing. I was on a coroner's jury when an Indian father killed his son-in-law for pulling the toe and finger nail out with a pair of pliers from the wife. We, the jury, voted to turn him loose, but the county prosecutor said an example had to be set and asked the judge to send him to prison for two years.

Since I took care of all athletic injuries, one of the common disinfectants used for cuts and sores was rubbing alcohol. Sometimes I sent a small amount home with the Indian children and the word alcohol was on the bottle. It was the third year in Beatty when Mr. Joe Andre, owner of the local over-the-counter drugstore, informed me that he could not supply me with any more rubbing alcohol. He had sold more alcohol than all druggists in the state had sold, and principally to Indians. The law had discovered that the Indians had been using it to drink and many were having trouble with their eyes and stomachs. As a result, no more rubbing alcohol could be sold in Beatty until the ban was lifted a year later, when the Indians were educated to the dangers of its use.

On the road leading into Death Valley from Beatty and at the summit, there was a checking station for checking cars entering the monument. One of the attendants was a young man from Los Angeles who had an unpleasant early life and had not completed high school. He expressed a desire to complete his school work. I enrolled him and gave him his assignments and he would come to the school once a week for evaluation of his work. He did this for one year and since, he was enthusiastic about his work and had such a strong compulsion to further his education, the lower grades teacher, Mrs. Bailey, helped him to get a part-time job in Beatty and let him live at her place. He later married one of Mrs. Bailey's daughters, after graduating from

high school and a university, and he became a teacher and coach in California. Society gained from my bending the state educational rules, which did not permit me to enroll in a student who was living in another state.

Clifford Kleist's father was building a mill below Beatty, and Clifford was absent from high school much of the time. His father had an old truck and let Clifford use it. We discovered that the school absences were caused by Clifford's going out into the desert and to old abandoned mines and getting metal junk for a Japanese company that was sending it to Japan. The company was taking advantage of the boy and promising him pay but never delivering it. Mr. Dees, the upper grades teacher, and I convinced the boy they were using him and that possibly the metal would be used against us in a war. This proved true, as the war actually began a short time later at Pearl Harbor. The boy later remarked that possibly some of the junk he had been collecting would be hurled back at him, as he was of draft age.

My hobby for collecting Indian artifacts was continued here at Beatty, as there was no work available for me during the summer vacation. I, rather, divided the country up into sections from a map and would cover an area quite thoroughly before going to the next hunting area. Thus, I became quite familiar with all the trails and old mining roads. I found many items, such as foot wear and arrows, and like as had not been found before, as stated by Dr. Harrington, of the Southwest Museum in California. I had a strange experience on one trip, as I was on a mountain top overlooking the upper part of Death Valley, when I had a very queer feeling as if I were not alone and that someone was near me. A voice seemed to say: "Go over by the big rock and dig." I went over by the rock and under leaves and limbs I found a

bundle of twelve arrows. They were arrows which were used before arrowheads and were very crudely made and in perfect condition. Another time, I noticed a rock shelf on a bluff overlooking the Beatty Camp. Then all the Indians left the camp for a pow-wow at Ash Meadows, I went to the shelf and found the medicine man's cache of many items relating to past events in the tribe's history. In this cache, was a fired #12 shotgun shell that apparently had been used in an Indian killing and the law had been unable to find the shell at the time of the inquest.

The oldest Indian in camp and grandfather to most of the children was the arrow maker. I saw some of his arrows in the Beatty stores and was curious at to how he made them. I went to the Indian camp and found him squatted on the ground by a blanket on which his artisan tools were spread. He immediately covered his work by the loose end of the blanket. He ignored me and sat in silence and I did likewise. After some time I laid a silver dollar on the blanket. After about fifteen minutes, he uncovered his tools and began to work. He was flaking arrow points with the antler from a spiked buck. He was making the points from glass and obsidian and they were beautiful. His arrows were made with eagle feathers as the feathering, and the long center part of the arrows was made from tule rods, with about six inches on each end of round wooden sticks inserted into the tule and bound. The bindings on the arrows was gut and sinews. He attached the points with a cement which he made from resin, animal organs and a clay from the base of Mt. Whitney. These ingredients were cooked in a clay pot until they reached the right consistency to harden when placed around the stick and arrowhead. Later, the Indian Service told me they were exact in detail to the arrows found in caves along the Colorado River. I found that it took two days

to make one and he wouldn't take any more than 25¢ per arrow for them. I tried to give him more, but he refused. When he completed arrows, he would bring them to my house and I bought many and sold them to the Goldfield school principal, who sent them to museums in New England, as he came from that area. I personally gave many away to friends and sent some to museums. The money received from these arrows went to help feed his grandchildren. Some of his grandchildren in school told me that they used his arrows when hunting rabbits, and they were very accurate when shot. I wanted a picture of this arrow maker, but he was afraid of the little black box. However, I got a picture of his back as he walked away from my house. The old man tried to teach his art to a grandchild, so that the art would not be lost, but no child would attempt to learn. Therefore, this art from this Indian tribe was lost forever.

Beatty seemed to be a retirement settlement for many of the old-time miners and prospectors. The climate in the wintertime was generally mild, and they owned or rented the little old one-room miners' shacks brought in from the dead mining camps around Death Valley. One of the oldest citizens of the locality was Jerome Borer, who had homesteaded a few acres at the south edge of town. He had come to Beatty as a prospector with a burro at the time before Rhyolite and Bullfrog were famous. It was said that he had two cows and yet he supplied most of the fresh milk to the community. His secret for expanding the milk supply was never discovered. He was sort of a recluse, and since he was ninety years old and frequently needed help with his windmill for pumping water for his grapevines, I assisted him with his pump, knowing that I would get grapes when they were ripe. He was an educated man and was quite versed in all the history of the surrounding areas. I went with

him on several prospecting trips, taking my car, and he acted as a guide. We spent much time in the areas of Oak Springs, Tolicha Peak and Tahmonie, which is now included in the region of atom bomb testing. Before I left Beatty, he found a good outcropping of ore, and, since he was in poor health due to prostate trouble, he sold the claim for \$1,000 and went to Salt Lake City for an operation and died during the operation. Since he had been on Nye county welfare, the county took his property.

O.H. Smith was another old timer in Beatty and had been county commissioner for several years. He owned the ice plant and generously donated ice to the school women's club for any fund-raising event for the school. Several years later my wife and I stopped in to a Beatty restaurant for lunch and he came in and hugged us and informed me that I was the only one around Beatty for five years who wasn't afraid of certain families of undesirables who lived there, and that, because I stood up to them and would not back down, they were afraid to push me concerning the school, and the school had therefore been a great success.

Tom Harris was clerk of the school board when I first went to Beatty and continued as such during my five years. He owned a small garage and a few rental houses or mining shacks, and we lived in one during the five years we were there. He was the one I consulted at all times, as no board meeting was every held. The other members had told him to make all the decisions. He was a kind and gentle man and loved all the school children and was always ready to help the school at all times. Years later, after I left Betty, he sold his holdings there are moved to Oregon, where he assumed his real name. Tom Harris had been an assumed name, which he had taken after family troubles in Oregon many years before.

Another helper for the school was Mr. C. Johnson, who had a small store in the main block of Beatty. He let me have bread for the Indians lunches at cost. He had a granddaughter, Virginia, in school. Mr. Johnson was a real old timer, too, as he had once been a driver of the 20mule-team borax wagons in Death Valley, and had spent his life around Beatty and Death Valley. In his store, he trusted everyone and let people charge their purchases of groceries. One day he asked me to help him with his accounts and tax returns. Mr. Dees, the upper grade teacher, had had experience in tax accounting., so I suggested that he contact him. Mr. Dees went to work on his books and found that the charge accounts were tremendous and that people had left town and gone to places unknown without paying. There was no way to recover the money, so Mr. Johnson burned all the accounts, amounting to thousands of dollars, and started a cash business, except for the school, as he knew he would get money from the school on a monthly basis.

Bill McCrosky was a member of the board during my five years, and he had several children in school. His family was wonderful and they all aided the school in every way. Mrs. McCrosky was leader of the women's club that provided so much aid to the school children. The McCroskys took frequent trips into the desert to the old mining towns. It was on one of these outings to the old ghost town of Wahmonie, when we were looking for a cave according to Indian legend and witnessed by a Beatty Indian school child – a cave of silver bars – that I got into a rattlesnake den and was rescued by Mr. McCrosky. I was on a large rock and the snakes surrounded me. McCrosky killed snakes until our arms ached from throwing rocks. On one of these outings we went to an abandoned ranch between Goldfield and Tolicha Peak where

Will James, the famous author, had done cowboy range work.

Rhyolite was only a few miles from Beatty, and we were frequent visitors. There were two business men who always contributed to the school's need for aid to the children, and they were Mr. Murphy, who kept the Bottle House Museum, and Mr. Westmorland, who owned the old railroad passenger stations, which included a bar and a museum. Murphy had an assortment of rocks and jewelry for sale and gave the school or women's club jewelry to raffle off when they were holding fund-raising events.

Westmorland was from Georgia and had come to the desert for health reasons. He had been told by an Indian medicine man that fried red ants would cure his physical problems. Therefore, he paid Indian children to catch the large desert red ants. He kept a jar of the fried ones on his bar counter and offered them to his customers. Few took any of them. He ate them frequently, as others eat peanuts. They didn't cure him, as eventually he passed away and his property passed on to his sister, who continued to operate the place. I was in his place talking to him when the radio news came that the Japs had attacked Pearl Harbor.

The war brought registration for the draft, and in the spring of 1942, my number came up for a call to service. When school ended in the spring I went to the draft board and told them that, if I were going to be taken, I would rather go during the summer, so that the school board could get a replacement for me. I was informed that I would not be called, as I was too old, but I was needed as a defense worker at Gabbs Valley. They called Basic Magnesum at Gabbs and informed them that I would be on my way there for work.

I proceeded on my way to Luning, Nevada, where I was to leave the pavement

and take a dirt and graveled road to Gabbs. This road was the only main one into Gabbs and due to the trucks hauling construction equipment and materials over this road it was pot-holed and rough. At the end of the road were the three mining camps of Brucite, Sierra magnesite and Basic Magnesum. These mining works were based against the foot of the Paradise Mountain Peak and the broad expanse of Gabbs Valley spread for many miles in front of the camps, even to Rawhide. I was processed through security, as this was a government operation, given a badge in keeping with my job, which was with the engineering department. I was assigned living quarters in a bunk house on the project and would eat at the mess hall.

McDonald Engineering Co. was doing the construction of the huge processing plant for the processing of magnesite ore, and they had a tent city in the valley for their employees. However, many of the employees of Basic and McDonald had brought along their families and had pitched tents for living quarters. Others had brought in old shacks from other mining camps. There was a store with a few mining camps houses nearby, and it was known as Smithville, as they were owned by Gordon, Lindsay and Dennis Smith. These three brothers had been in the business before at Silver Peak and when Gabbs began they moved their operations to this new location.

As this summer of 1942 really got underway, more families were coming into the valley. This meant more school age children and by the last of June a demand for a school was voiced and petitioned. The Government said no and the State said no. Each was trying the patience of the other. But the parents prevailed, as the state law was explicit in that education had to be provided if there were three or more students, and there were more than that. Mildred Bray was

State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and a very good one, too. She contacted the federal authorities and informed them they must help provide a school and help bear the expenses. She appointed a school board, consisting of Charles Roberts, president of Sierra Magnesite Co., and Owen Keim, chief chemist for Basic Magnesium.

I had met all of these men in the course of my work and several times I had played horseshoes with Mr. Keim, and he knew that I was then under contract at Beatty. He asked me to apply for the principalship of the Gabbs school, which I did. Mildred Bray, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, advised the board to employ me, as not only was I familiar with the area, but I had experience with local isolated schools. I now became principal of a school that did not exist, and, too, there were no school facilities. Everything was an unknown quantity now. First I had to get released from my contract at Beatty, which the Beatty board kindly did and gave my position there to Mr. Fred Dees, who already had been in the system several years. My wife and daughter did not take too kindly to the news about moving, but finally decided they already had pioneering experience at Deer Lodge and could meet the challenge.

I quit my job at Basic to get things started toward the organization of a school and also to find living quarters for my family. The small community around Smith's store was now known as Toiyabe and I went to Dennis Smith to seek housing. He was very helpful and kind and promised me the first shack that became vacant. It wasn't long until I was a renter in Toiyabe of a mining home. It was very small but looked like a palace when compared to living quarters of other families. I left for Beatty to bring back my family to the new abode. Since tires were rationed now, I wanted to preserve mine, and we traveled

from Beatty pulling a two-wheeled trailer at night, and arrived at our place of residence at daylight. The family accepted the new place, as they were too tired and sleepy to rebel.

It was too late to build a building for the school, so we had to find something already there. In tent city, McDonald, the prime contractor for the project, said that we could use some of their bunk house tents if we could convert them to school use. These tents were large enough for two double bunk beds for four men. The carpenters went to work converting them for school use. Since the stove and door were on one end, four benches and two tables were made the long way of the tent. There was only a crude local construction chair for teacher and no blackboard or bulletin board. Children were crowded so closely that if a child needed to go to the bathroom it had to get on top of the table and walk to the end and step off and out the door. These tents were real death traps, but we were fortunate that we had no fire problems. When the heavy rains came, the tents leaked and our new books got soaked.

Employing teachers for this primitive isolated area was not easy, but Mildred Bray knew some teachers who taught in areas similar, and whose schools had closed, and sent them to me. Mrs. Ann McCoy was to teach lower grade in one of the tents, and since she was unmarried she was permitted to stay in the bunkhouse on the project designated for female office workers. She was a very pleasant individual and devoted many years to teaching lower grade children at Gabbs.

Mrs. Clara Achurra occupied a tent as middle grades' teacher. Her husband, Peter, was welcomed on the project as a warehouse worker. They had one child, Ruth, and they, too, lived in one of Smiths' small mining shacks. The Achurras and my family became



close friends, and Mrs. Achurra taught at Gabbs for many years and gave good service.

George Prentice and his wife, Phyllis, already were on the government project, as he was chief purchasing agent, and they had living quarters. Since Mrs. Prentice had taught school previously, she consented to take a tent and teach the upper grades. She, too, was a dedicated teacher and gave many years of service to the school.

My tent housed all the high school students, and I had students from freshmen to seniors. I was experienced at this, for I had been for five years the only high school teacher at Beatty. The only difference here was the crowded space and lack of blackboard for math work. We studied nothing but the basic high school required subjects, and the students did remarkably well under the circumstances. It never occurred to me then of the possible changes to come, when I would go from teaching high school subjects to a time several years later when I would be the administrator of the high school and elementary school and would not be teaching. Neither did I visualize that I would spend fifteen years in the service of the Toiyabe (or later called Gabbs) schools.

This whole Gabbs Valley project was being built to process local magnesite ore into concentrates to be hauled in large tanker trucks to Henderson, Nevada, where magnesium was to be made. Magnesium was to be used for the war effort, in bombs and war machinery. This was to be a permanent industry. As such a townsite was needed, and after several choices of location were considered, the present one was selected and construction of houses began in 1942. On the lower side of the townsite a rather odd looking large building was begun. Some people thought it was a school, but I knew it wasn't, as the rooms were not the right shape.

I was told after much secrecy that it was a club house for the elite and bosses. To me, a school was needed more than a club house. I notified Guild Bray, Deputy State Superintendent of Public Instruction, what was planned. He informed the government that school could not be held in tents for a second year. A school must be built. It wasn't long after this until I was asked to come to Henderson government offices to help draw plans for a new school. While there, they showed me the plans of the club or recreation house, and we agreed on changes to enlarge the recreation floor so that physical education games could be played. More carpenters were brought in and work on the school recreation hall and townsite houses increased. By May of 1943 enough of the school was completed so that graduation exercises could be held in the multipurpose room. We said goodbye to the tents, although we had endured the cold and dampness of them, we realized they had served a good purpose during this war emergency. We were now looking forward to a new school year in a more comfortable environment.

These tents served not only as a school, but on the Sabbath Day my wife, Marie N. Moore, and a few other mothers held Sunday School services for the children. This was the first religious service held in the valley as far as I can ascertain.

When the new rec hall was completed, these same women held Sunday services there and eventually Rev. Schriver, from Carson City, began preaching service there once a month and this continued until a church building was constructed near the rec hall in 1958. The services were of a non-denominational nature. The religious services in the new church were conducted and sponsored by Village Missions, a national non-denominational group with headquarters in Missouri.

Upon completion of the school building, I was notified by the Government that they were sending equipment for the building, but it was not assembled. All desks and many tables had to be assembled, and since the school district had no money for this, it meant that I had an all summer job without pay. My salary of \$3000, for a year was less than the lowest paid laborer on the project. It just didn't seem fair, as the school and its functions were secondary to the war effort. Since the enrollment for the coming year had increased, it was necessary to employ an additional high school teacher and one for the elementary grades. Ruth Gilbert, from Mina, Nevada, originally from Texas, was to teach math and science in the high school, and Rubymae Swalley, from Corning, California, was to work in the elementary grades. They were both excellent teachers and were appreciated greatly by the community.

The mill was completed and the construction crew of McDonald Engineering left and the mill began to operate. But not for long, as the government discovered that the cost of the finished product was excessive. Dow Chemical could make magnesium from sea water at a lower cost. Therefore, the orders came in 1948 to close down the operations. The school enrollment declined rapidly until I was teaching upper grades elementary and Mrs. Mamie Berryman was teaching lower grades. The few high school students were sent to other Nevada high schools, where the students had friends or relatives.

This was a trying time for all who lived in Gabbs, as rumor after rumor spread like falling leaves. One day we would hear that everyone would be forced to move, and then in a few days we would get the message from the rumor mill that some large company was buying the mill and mines and houses and that would mean more people.

I was as confused about the circumstances surrounding the community as anyone else, but since I was the educational leader in the community I had to make plans to meet the needs of the school-age persons. At this time upon the community descended the vultures of the business world who were looking to get something for nothing. They were the ones who looked for bankrupt business and government boondoggles, to purchase at 10 cents on the dollar, and then sell at enormous profits. These people came from Los Angeles, San Francisco, Salt Lake City and many other cities, checking all over the project on equipment and buildings. They came into the school without permission during the school day, measuring doors and windows and disrupting classes until I had enough and I took a ball bat and ran them off the school grounds.

It was evident to me that the school was needed here for the future of this community. Dr. Charles Vitaliano, who was the government geologist on the project, informed me that the magnesite ore deposit here was one of the largest and most valuable in the world and that it had a great potential as a source for refractory material for use in steel mills of our country. If not now, it certainly would be developed some time in the future. I called a school board meeting, as we were then operating under local school districts. I gave them the information I had received and asked permission to begin an application to the federal government for a gift from the government of the school building, recreation building, and a deed to the land on which they stood, plus enough land for playground and athletic activities. The board approved of my request, and this was the beginning of the community operations for the saving of the Basic Magnesium Incorporated holdings from the vultures and politicians, and leaving

it for a future purchaser who would be an asset to the community, county and the state.

This step taken by the school board prompted the forming of a committee, in 1948, consisting of Emmitt Cannon, Lindsay Smith and myself, who were determined to acquaint our United States Senators and Representatives of the potential of Gabbs' future and what it would mean to the State of Nevada. These individuals, Alan Bible, George Malone and Charles Russell, were very receptive to the idea and promised to take the necessary steps to convince the government leaders to curtail the salvage plans and look to the future for long-range benefits from the millions of dollars expended at Gabbs. Not only did these men work and lend their support for this project, but they got behind the school application, and it wasn't long until the school was notified, in 1949, that its request would be honored and a deed to the property would be forthcoming. Also, all of the BMI holdings would be placed in custody of the General Services Administration for sale to some company which would utilize the facilities and make the holdings productive.

The school was at a low enrollment now, but things looked better in 1949, as Standard Slag Company, which owned some magnesite claims, constructed a mill and employed men with families. Basic Refractories Company, with headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio, and which owned several claims of brucite ore, and which had been for several years operating a small mining operation in Brucite Canyon, made a purchase deal with the Government for all of the assets of the Basic Magnesium Incorporated. This meant more families and more children for school.

The increased enrollment brought more children and more teachers which filled the space in the original school building. A

proposal for bond issue for a new high school was advanced and approved by the voters, and a new gymnasium was added.

About this time the state legislature changed the law to make county school districts instead of the local districts and to have a county superintendent of schools. This meant that all the schools in the county would have equal services, and teachers would be on the same salary schedule countywide. It sounded wonderful but had a disadvantage for Gabbs teachers, due to the isolation. The only services in Gabbs were one grocery store, one small restaurant, one filling station and one saloon. Teachers had to drive one hundred miles to Tonopah, sixty-five miles to Hawthorne, or eighty-five miles to Fallon, for any other needed services. This was a disadvantage to the local teachers, and therefore at times first-quality teachers would not come to Gabbs, or, if they did, they remained only one year.

In 1942, during the rush of construction, there were several thousand people in Gabbs. Many men lived in bunk houses and others in tents. There were special bunk houses for the many single women, who waited on table and worked in the offices. The supplying of recreation was limited under the regulations enforced. Lindsay Smith and Cordon Smith built a large saloon and gambling hall on a mining claim adjacent to the government property. McDonald Engineering, the prime contractor, erected a large tent in their tent city, which was to be used for nightly dancing. This gave a choice, either you could dance or spend your free time in the saloon or at gambling. People were here in Gabbs who had never lived in a gambling environment before. They could not control themselves and hold onto their pay checks. Shortly after pay day, when it was time to send money home to their families, they were rushing around trying to



borrow money. There were a few men who made more money in interest on loans than they made in wages. At the dance tent there were many fights and in a few months the place closed, as the government law men grew tired of settling disputes.

As the completion of construction proceeded, men were moving away and, since a low-cost housing project had been built west of the townsite and school, in 1943, and it had a small recreation facility, this was the center for recreation on a small scale. The large recreation hall in the townsite was padlocked when completed, and no one was permitted to use it until 1944, when Anaconda Copper Company opened it for use by the community.

There were two housing projects and each was run by a different United States government department. In 1943 the Red Cross started an active chapter in Gabbs at the low-cost recreation building. This gave the women a chance to get together to roll bandages and sew for the war effort. Since the school children needed something to occupy their spare time, we organized a Junior Red Cross, and after school engaged in making metal ash trays from baby food cans. Also, we had some talented carvers who carved beautiful ash trays from Brucite rock. The group produced about five thousand metal trays and twenty-five stone ones. Our stone trays went to the South Pacific for officers' quarters and we received letters of thanks from them.

Since Anaconda Copper Company was assigned by the government the operation of the mine and mill in 1944, they said there was more need for recreation in the community, and therefore they opened the large recreation hall and made it available for the public. They appealed to the U.S.O. for help since this was a primary defense plant and Gabbs was so isolated. In the fall of

1944 the U.S.O. responded, and a recreation project was approved. Marie Moore, my wife, was designated as the director, and they assisted her in setting up a program to satisfy the needs of all age groups. I became her assistant for the evening and night groups, which participated in dancing and athletic activities. The music for dancing was provided by a "juke box," which had been donated by the Gabbs Women's Club. The U.S.O. ceased operating after a little over a year, when it was decided Gabbs was not contributing to the war effort. Also, during the U.S.O. period, and afterwards, the rec hall was used for potluck dinners, card parties, school activities, and Frank Jones took one night a week to show movies.

From the time of the opening of the recreation hall, each Friday night a school dance was held for the upper grades and high school students. This provided a chance for the youngsters to blow off their extra energy, and it was appreciated by all. This was carried on for several years, until single men came to work in the mill and mines and tried to crash the dances. This led to fights and disagreements between the high school students and the dances had to stop, because they caused too much trouble for the local law enforcement deputies.

The Gabbs Women's Club was organized in the early days of the camp and contributed to the recreation and worthwhile projects for the community. They contributed greatly to the school in that they sponsored each year a banquet for the graduating students. They sponsored, with the school, Christmas programs and musicals, and when the school had no teacher musically talented, Mrs. Sutton, a club member, provided the musical leadership for the music programs. The club also started a community library, which supplemented the school library.

Many of the Gabbs people enjoyed fishing, and our main stream for this recreation was Reese River, which had its beginning near Arc Dome Mountain, north and east of Ione, Nevada. It was a long rough road there, but almost everyone enjoyed the wonderful trout and most caught their limit on each trip. Other Gabbs families took to the hills in search of pretty rocks or Indian artifacts. I enjoyed both fishing and rock hunting. Raymond Sutton was my partner on the rock hunting and we went far into the back country for the elusive rocks which could be used for rock gardens or gem stones. He used his for yard decorations, while I sawed and polished mine into jewelry items. On these trips, each of us added to our Indian collections by finding grinding stones and arrowheads.

Norman Hansen, superintendent of Basic Refractories, which had taken over the complete operations at Gabbs, was keenly interested in the recreational activities of the community. He constructed a building for boy scout work and another building for the use of the girl scouts. Scouting was a great thing for Gabbs youth and kept many of them occupied with worthwhile endeavors. Mr. Hansen also constructed tennis courts and a large swimming pool. His company paid for lifeguards at the pool during its operation. He and his company purchased from the Tonopah Air Base an abandoned building and moved it to Gabbs and reconstructed it into a town hall, that a Masonic Lodge and Order of Eastern Star were organized.

Medical and health services were a hit-and-miss proposition for the people of this community. During the construction period beginning in 1941 and 1942 the government and McDonald Engineering Company provided a doctor and first-aid services. Then when the plant began to operate under Anaconda Company only first-aid services

were available. Basic Refractories, however, built a doctor's home and clinic. Most of the doctors were not reliable, as the company was not able to subsidize their earnings enough to get first rate doctors. Many of the doctors had emotional problems and several had other problems which led the people to believe they were second rate. Therefore, most people relied on established doctors in Hawthorne, sixty-five miles away. Mrs. Clara Willard, a registered nurse, lived in Gabbs in 1943 and at other various times, and when there the people depended upon her for health advice and services. She always responded to a call from the school to give us needed advice. Twice during my years at Gabbs a state-funded dental clinic visited the school, and twice Dr. Moulton from Reno came to Gabbs and conducted a vision screening. Beginning in 1952, the County sent a nurse to the school one day per month to check on the health needs of the children. Gabbs, being isolated, the community seemed to escape many of the diseases prevalent in the other more populated areas.

In 1954, with the new gym and high school, Gabbs entered into all school activities in a great way. Football, basketball and track were all supported quite well by the community. There were some in the community who were too enthusiastic about the athletic program and who believed in winning at all costs. This led to a misunderstandings between themselves, the coach and myself. My philosophy was to do everything squarely, fairly and honestly and if you lost the game you had no bitter feelings toward anyone. I felt that new people coming into the community were wanting a new athletic policy—win at all costs; to which I could not agree. I evaluated everything and decided that after fifteen years spent in an isolated place such as Gabbs should entitle me to find another

location near or in a larger population center. Also, high school students were beginning to be more demanding and discipline problems were increasing.

Drugs were beginning to be introduced into the community, and a few high school students were partaking of the so-called "joy sticks." The young miners mixing with high school students were conveying ideas which would sooner or later lead to school problems. I had experienced painful confrontations with the community and the students over a drug confrontation with the community and the students over a drug confrontation and did not want any more of this community service, for it was unrewarding. All of these undesirable circumstances led me to resign in June of 1957.

In answer to the questions why I had remained at Gabbs for fifteen years through its infancy and on into its maturity, I would say because of the wonderful and loving people. Not all were of that type, but the most were considerate, helpful, dedicated and dependable. To most, the school was the center of the community and all school functions were heartily supported. I should like to name the full supporters of the school, but the list would be too long and then I might omit some. Some of the outstanding school board members, however, were: Owen Keim, R.C. Jones, Charles Roberts, Emmitt Cannon, Charles Vitaliano, C.A. Milne, William Cook and Vernon Wines.

After resigning, I decided that retirement was not too far away and I believed I would like to spend my last years with the elementary levels. I rent and application to Washoe County Schools and was offered a position as principal and upper grades teacher at the Home Gardens School. I was happy to sign the contract and make plans for moving into a city environment. For twenty-two years I had

been serving the rural and isolated schools of Nevada and really felt I was entitled to enjoy some of the comforts to be found in city living.

Home Gardens was located near the Reno airport in southwest Reno and was somewhat of a rural setting. Most of the homes in the area had large gardens and many families had horses for their children to ride. These people really enjoyed their community and I was fully accepted by all. I felt that the students were capable of doing better work than was indicated by their scores on previous achievement tests. I asked the two other teachers to put more pressure and demands on the students, as I was exerting more on the fifth and sixth grades. When the county achievement tests were given and the results were evaluated by Mr. Brownin Churn, the director of testing and guidance, he informed me that his decision was to give another series of tests to the upper grades. He gave these tests himself and after evaluating the scores informed me that the scores were equal to the previous test. The reason for the second test was to verify the great progress that these students had made. It proved what a little pressure and no foolishness could accomplish.

The children were all wonderful and, as spring was then upon us, I was looking forward to the next year. But one school day there was a knock on the door and there stood Superintendent Earl Wooster, who refused entrance but informed me that I was being transferred the next year to be principal of McKinley Park School. He informed me to go to the new location and get acquainted with the school and the hot lunch program. I was greatly elated over this advancement even though I was in love with the children and people in Home Gardens.

At the appointed time I arrived at McKinley Park School located on Riverside Drive and facing the river. I thought it was the most ideal

setting for a school that I had ever seen. The old building had status compared to the new type of school architecture. Everything went well on this visit and I was greatly anticipating being principal and working in this school.

Home Gardens received my farewells and I enrolled in the University of Nevada for summer courses. Also, my spare time was spent working and remodeling the old house on Lincoln Way, Sparks, which we had purchased the year before when we first moved into the area. However, several times during the summer I was at the school planning for the school session to begin. When it did begin, I found a dedicated group of teachers and pupils eager to learn. I did the principal's duties during half of each day and the other half I taught some fifth and sixth graders. In this school I had my first experience with P.T.A. organization. In most cases it was very helpful, but there were a few who would try to dictate school policy and wanted to help make rules for the school. I accepted their suggestions but always reminded them of the constitution and aims of the P.T.A. Since there was a vacant room in the building, the county school supervisors decided to use it for a class of mentally disturbed children. The teacher was young and inexperienced in this task and many times I would have to rescue the teacher from the students when they decided to turn against her. It was also the year of the deepest snow that I have seen in Reno. A Tonopah low came in about 1:00 p.m. and in a short time the snow piled up to great depths and the central school office called and said to send the children home. When all were gone, I had a struggle to get home to Sparks, as traffic was snarled on all of the streets.

The school year was very successful and I, with the faculty, came to the closing days anticipating what we could do better next year to make improvements. We were also looking toward an enjoyable summer vacation.

This was the summer of 1959 and I, with my family, decided on a vacation trip to visit my relatives in Indiana and my wife's relatives in Georgia. We were in Georgia during the first week of August when I received the July school check. I looked at it and was astounded at the amount over what I had been receiving. I was certain an error had been made and decided not to cash it until I returned home to clear up the situation. But just before leaving my daughter wrote that she saw in the paper that I had been assigned as principal to a larger school. This was a puzzle to me all the way back home, as I had not applied for any change from the McKinley Park School.

Upon returning home, the check puzzle was explained that Rita Cannon, principal of Mary S. Doten School for many years, was retiring. The teaching staff there was composed of teachers who had been there for many years, and they were about middle age or older, and the school board decided that the school should have an older principal.

I was now extremely busy in checking McKinley Park to see that everything would be in order for the new principal, and getting Mary S. Doten ready for the opening day. Mary S. Doten was the same architectural design as McKinley Park. It was a school which had a lot of history behind it, as it was one of the first schools built in Reno. I found that Miss Rita Cannon had left it with everything well organized, and I decided to follow her plans and make no radical changes.

I began my work with the 1959-60 school year and ended my teaching and administrative work with retirement at the end of the school year of 1967-68. It meant that I had spent nine years in this beautiful old buildin at Fifth and Washington in Reno.

Our school boundaries were the railroad tracks, Keystone, University Terrace and Sierra Street, for the first year, and then

McKinley Park closed and we included all of its area. Also, buses brought children from outside Reno, who lived in trailers, were used to going to the toilet in the sagebrush, and, instead of using the toilets in the restrooms, used the floors. This enraged the school janitors. At the beginning of school, the primary teachers had to educate the small children in the use of the toilets.

We had many discipline problems with the children of parents who had come to Reno for divorces. Our school area contained many low-rental apartments which these outsiders used, and most of their children were rebelling against the problem of a breakup of the family.

During those years at Mary S. Doten the school faculty was wonderful. The teachers were dedicated and were believers in strict discipline. In achievement, our students ranked equal to the other schools.

I loved the Washoe County School System and found complete cooperation from all the supervisors and administrators from the central offices. They were always ready to help when called upon, and their criticisms were friendly and constructive. It was a sad day, but a welcome one, when I received my notice from the central office that retirement time had come. It was June of 1968 when the Appreciation Award from the County was received. I had served under County Superintendents Earl Wooster, Proctor Hug and Marvin Ricollo, and found them all sincere, capable individuals who were striving always to advance the cause of better education for the students of Washoe County.



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